

The following amendment is filed in connection with a Request for Continued Examination ("RCE"), and responds to the issues raised in the Final Official Action dated December 12, 2002. Applicants note that a response ("After Final Amendment") to the Final Official Action was timely filed on March 26, 2003. However, as the Examiner asserted that it raised new issues and required additional searching, the Examiner did not enter it. Thus, the amendments made in the After Final Amendment, including the traversal of the Examiner's restriction requirement and the subsequent cancellation of claims 23-26; amendments to claims 17, 19, and 21; and the addition of new claims 27-38, were not entered. Accordingly, the claims presently pending in this application are claims 2-26, with claims 23-26 being provisionally withdrawn by the Examiner.